

Round Hill
Community Church

The News Letter

December 2010

Catching the Spirit of Round Hill

PASTOR'S MESSAGE



Long before the birth of Jesus, many ancient cultures had already set aside time in late December to celebrate the winter solstice, the darkest time of the year when the days are shortest. What better way to forget for a time the tight grip of darkness that surrounded them than to celebrate, to

sing merry songs and enjoy specially prepared foods?

The truth of the matter is, of course, that for much of the world, including for many Christians, Christmas still resembles a pagan winter solstice festival. It is a time to huddle around an artificial light so that we might have a momentary reprieve from our troubles and, for a time, forget the darkness – the outer darkness of these days, and the far more threatening inner darkness of each of our days. Maybe that's why Christmas stories are so much a part of the season, stories from books and movies, ballets and plays. They not only take our mind off our problems, but remind us of what we know to be true and right but so easily forget much of the time.

This story comes from William Muehl, who taught for many years at Yale Divinity School. "One December afternoon many years ago a group of parents stood in the lobby of a nursery school waiting to pick up their children after the last pre-Christmas session. As the youngsters ran from their lockers, each one was carrying in his or her hands the 'surprise,' the brightly wrapped package on which the class had been working for weeks.

One small boy, trying to run, put on his coat, and

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CHRISTMAS ON ROUND HILL



PREVIEW PARTY December 3 • 6 to 9 p.m.

FAIR December 4 • 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE PRELUDE

Friday, December 24, 9:30 p.m.

"Traditional Carols for Brass and a World Premiere"



In addition to the traditional carols performed by brass quintet and choir, a commissioned work, *Song of the Angels* by composer Elise Grant, will receive its premiere performance. Written this year for the Round Hill Community Church Choir, *Song of the Angels* is

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CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Church School



"A child is not a vessel to be filled but a lamp to be lit."

The Season for Thanksgiving

Two weeks ago, the entire Church School focused on preparing care packages for the RHCC youth who are away at college. The kids had a lot of fun preparing creative packages, and writing and coloring notes to go with the packages.

They also wrote "get well" messages to Rev. Doug Miller, who had had surgery on his knee. The children were thrilled when, during the children's message on November 21, Rev. Miller told them how much those notes made him smile at a time when he wasn't feeling well.

Christmas Pageant

It's a busy and exciting time of year for the RHCC children as they prepare to perform the Christmas Pageant for the congregation during the Worship Service on Sunday, December 12. They will be rehearsing in earnest during church school for the next several weeks. There will also be an extra rehearsal on Saturday, December 11 from 10:00 a.m. to noon for all participants.



Advent Workshop

On Sunday, November 28, RHCC members, friends, and neighbors gathered in the Community House for the Advent Workshop. During this special event the children decorated angels and gingerbread houses and joined the adults for a light meal and fellowship. The evening culminated with carol singing and the lighting of the Christmas tree.



The angels will be placed on our traditional Angel Tree in the Parlor on Sunday, December 5. Nancy Fuzesi organizes the collection of requests for gifts from families in Norwalk who are in need of extra help. Pick up your angel and return a gift by December 19 so they can be distributed to the families before Christmas.

Remember that the children are also collecting new, small toys for children in Nicaragua to be delivered by Josefina Gutierrez. A collection box has been set up in the Narthex, and the last day for donations is December 19. Josefina and the children in her village in Nicaragua thank you.

*What do we live for, if not to make the world less
difficult for each other?*
— George Eliot



CENTER FOR FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Forum: Holistic Healing
Lyn Harmon
Sunday, December 12
11:15 a.m., Meeting Room



RHCC member Lyn Harmon has an Ed.D from Boston University in Psychology and Education and has worked for twenty-five years in private practice as a psychotherapist. She has also worked with Dr. Bernie Siegel and started his Cancer Support Groups in New York City.

Like many people in the field, she has been drawn to Buddhism and has spent time in France studying at Plum Village with Thich Nhat Hanh, author of *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, and many other books. Of all the great spiritual leaders, the Buddha focused on the power of the mind and how it affects our lives.

Five years ago, when asked to lead a weekly Meditation Group for people with health and stress issues at the newly formed Integrative Wing of Greenwich Hospital, she combined meditation with psychotherapy. The weekly attendance ranges from five to fifteen people, and most of them have been in the group for years. A few members have graciously agreed to join the forum to share the impact of the group on their lives and health.

Women's Spirit Rising

Women's Spirit Rising, our women's spirituality group, is hosting a winter retreat led by our very own Reverend Shannon White. We will stay at the Gilmor Sloane House at the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, NY (www.stonypointcenter.org). We will meet from Wednesday, January 19, to Thursday, January 20.



Gilmor Sloane House

The theme for the retreat will be "Living Out of Your Authentic Self," based on concepts Shannon has studied from research from Harvard and previous retreats. She promises the retreat will include individual and group reflections, labyrinth walks, meditation time together, and lots of fun! Additionally, we will eat very well. The facility has a wonderful organic chef who will prepare healthful meals for us in the kitchen of the historic Victorian home.

All women of the Church are warmly invited. The cost for the retreat will be \$125 per person, based on double occupancy. A non-refundable deposit of \$60.00 will reserve your spot. Please make checks payable to RHCC and note "women's retreat" in the memo (due by December 30). Please R.S.V.P. to Kerri Ann Hofer (kerriann@me.com).



LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY

Jean MacFarland



Jean MacFarland's watercolors and collages are steeped in New England romantic yearnings. She is the featured artist at Les Beaux Arts Gallery exhibit opening on Sunday, December 5, that runs through January 12, 2011.

Past and present, fact and fantasy, MacFarland's paintings are abstract yet very organic. The shapes are whimsical and the lines flow in a lyrical melody filled with romantic sensibility. She explains her work in these terms: "I am looking for that elusive something that propels me to try a different approach. The composition is always foremost in my thoughts, as is the zing of the color that excites me. With these new watercolors, the elements are dictated by the vertical flow of patterns and colors. I am greatly influenced by Klimt so that the real and surreal seem to fuse naturally. My memory is an imperfect guide to detail while my imagination glorifies each nuanced shape and color. The collages are organized shapes

dictated by the square. Then, dimension becomes evident with the addition of torn and colored tissue paper, magazine clippings as well as newsprint and, yes, old paintings that have reached no conclusion. Almost like putting a puzzle together, these compositions may be very planned or completely free just to happen. The best in creative experimentation! Always, my aim is to elicit a response. For you to see exactly what I see would be unimaginative! So look, and look again."

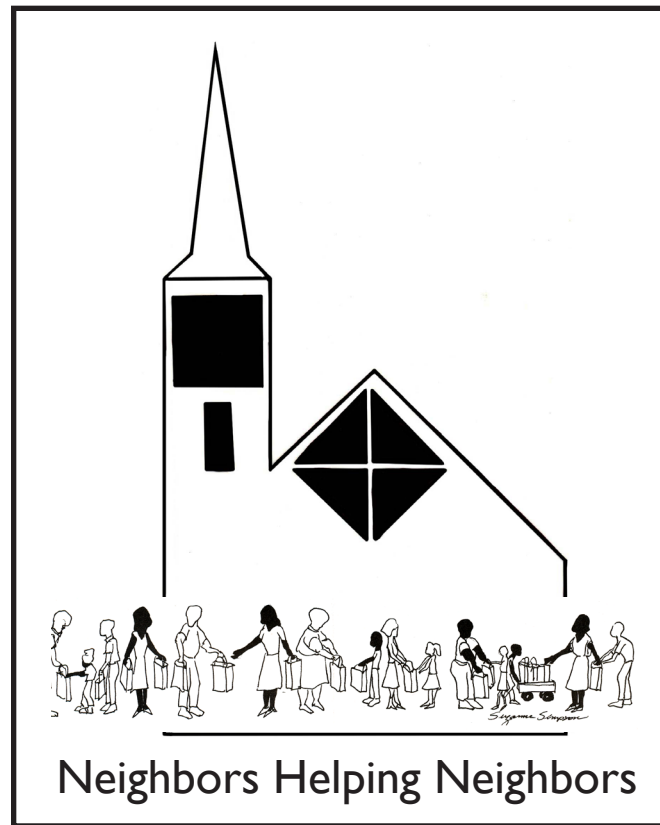
MacFarland graduated from Yale School of Art and Architecture. Over the years, she studied watercolor with Edgar Whitney and Frank Webb, pastels with Tom Brenner, and collage with Gerald Brommer. She has exhibited extensively in solos, group, and juried shows, and taught abstract/impressionistic watercolor at Greenwich YWCA and Greenwich Arts Society.

– Mirella Hajjar, Gallery Curator



BENEVOLENCE AND OUTREACH

Neighbor to Neighbor



Neighbor to Neighbor is dedicated to improving the lives of greater Greenwich by creating caring connections between members of our community by providing for the exchange of simple and basic living essentials in an atmosphere of kindness and respect.

In 1975, Neighbor to Neighbor opened its doors in the basement of Christ Church Greenwich as a clearinghouse for the distribution of free clothing and food to people with emergency needs in Greenwich, Stamford, and Port Chester.

While the food program began as an effort to supply food on an emergency basis, the Greenwich Department of Social Services asked Neighbor in 1984 to initiate a weekly food program for Greenwich families in great need of assistance in the face of increasing cost of living expenses. Volunteers packed bags with a variety of available food items to supply families with three meals, for three days, for each member of the family.

In September 2005, Neighbor opened a “Client

Choice” Food Pantry, one of only a few operating in the state of Connecticut. Clients now have the opportunity to do their own shopping with the aid of shopping lists provided with quantity guidelines based on nutrition and the number of people in the given family.

Today, in addition to responding to emergencies, Neighbor to Neighbor proudly provides ongoing supplemental food and clothing to individuals and families in the greater Greenwich area.

RHCC has been a supporter of Neighbor to Neighbor for many years, and we extend many thanks to everyone who has brought food in. Let’s try to make this an even better month for the 1,000 Greenwich residents who receive assistance with food from Neighbor to Neighbor.

Dried beans, cereals, and canned fruit are always needed. Medium sizes work best.

For more information on Neighbor to Neighbor, you can visit their website at www.n-to-n.org.

– Sandy Motland



PASTORAL MESSAGE

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wave to his parents all at the same time, slipped and fell. The ‘surprise’ flew from his grasp and landed on the tile floor with an obvious ceramic crash. The child’s first reaction was one of stunned silence. But then he set up an inconsolable wail. His father, thinking to minimize the incident and comfort the boy, patted his head and murmured, ‘Now that’s all right. It really doesn’t matter at all.’

But the child’s mother, somewhat wiser in such situations, dropped to her knees on the floor, swept the boy into her arms and said, ‘Oh, but it does matter. It matters a great deal.’ And she wept with her son.”

Then Muehl goes on to reflect, “The redeeming God in whom we hope is not the parent who dismisses our lives with a pat on the head and murmured reassurances. It is, rather, the one who falls to the earth beside us, picks up our torn and bleeding spirit and says, ‘Oh, but it does matter. It matters a great deal.’”

You are in good company if the peace, joy, hope, and love spoken of during this holy season seem elusive and out of touch with your experience. You see, if our Christmas celebration says only that our burdens can be easily lifted – with songs, a few gifts, and tables of food – then it means that the concerns and burdens we carry don’t matter all that much.

But if this is truly a Christmas celebration, then we are celebrating the coming of one who does not offer momentary escape from the darkness, but affirms that the burdens and concerns of our lives matter. The message is that God has chosen to enter our world, as dark as it is, and to share our lives, as burdened as they are, so that we may indeed see the light that shines in the darkness. It is a light that the darkness cannot overcome. Who knows, perhaps we may even become the light ourselves!

Merry Christmas to all.

– Douglas Miller

CHRISTMAS EVE PRELUDE

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scored for vocal quartet and choir, accompanied by keyboard and flute. The structure of the work presents the solo quartet in continual dialogue with the larger choir. While the writing is fresh and colorful, the harmonic vocabulary is traditionally tonal.

Grant studied music in New York City, at Sarah Lawrence, and the Mannes School. Postgraduate work was done in Paris with the renowned pedagogue Nadia Boulanger. She also studied at the Conservatoire Internationale de Musique de Geneve where she received the Prix de Composition.

– Christopher Kabala

STEWARDSHIP

At this writing, just prior to Thanksgiving, we have received almost two-thirds of our stewardship goal but we are still far from meeting our operating budget. We need everyone’s participation.

Everyone who has yet to put their pledge cards in the mail, or in the offering plate on Sunday, please do so as soon as you can. We do need to get a final number in hand before we can finalize the budget and programs for the coming year.

Thank you.

– Bill Herrick, Chair

CHURCH OFFICE NOTES

“Hello, You’ve Reached the Round Hill Community Church”

The Church has a new phone system that enables callers to leave confidential voice mails for all staff members. When a person is not available to answer the phone, a recording will offer prompts to access individual voice mailboxes or service times and

directions. If you want to short-cut the system, you may punch in the extension you are trying to reach at any time during the greeting message. The list of extensions follows.

Douglas Miller, Interim Senior Minister	102
Shannon White, Associate Minister	103
Christopher Kabala, Minister of Music	104
Ron Wilson, Finance/Community House Manager	105
Stephen Dunleavy, Sexton	106
Lynda Kinney, Administrator	101
To leave a general message	0

The News Letter *is edited by Nancy Mazzoli,
Claire McKean, Lawrence Sterne, and Lynda Kinney*

The News Letter

Round Hill Community Church
395 Round Hill Road
Greenwich, CT 06831
(203) 869-1091

Visit our website, roundhillcommunitychurch.org, to view more pictures, read past sermons, learn about the activities and history of RHCC, and check the monthly calendar.

DECEMBER 2010 AT ROUND HILL COMMUNITY CHURCH						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
WORSHIP AND CHURCH SCHOOL SUNDAYS AT 10:00 A.M. CHILDCARE AVAILABLE		LES BEAUX ARTS GALLERY: JEAN MACFARLAND WATERCOLORS AND COLLAGES		1 Christmas on RH Set Up 1 p.m. Staff Mtg.	2 Christmas on RH Set Up Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	3 CHRISTMAS ON RH PREVIEW PARTY, 6-9
5 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching Second Sunday Advent	6 Trustee Meeting 8 p.m.	7	8	9 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	10	11 Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10 a.m. to noon
12 CHRISTMAS PAGEANT , 10 a.m. Third Sunday Advent 11:15 Forum: Holistic Healing	13	14	15 Women's Spirit Rising Christmas Party, 12-1:30 Susanna Nielsen's house	16 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	17	18
19 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Doug Miller preaching Fourth Sunday Advent	20 Cooking for St. Lukes, 3 p.m.	21	22 Newsletter Deadline	23 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	24 Christmas Eve Office Closed 4 p.m. Family Service 9:30 p.m. Candle-light Service	25
26 Worship and Church School, 10 a.m. Guest Preacher Susan Ligouri	27 Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29	30 Choir Rehearsal 8:00 p.m.	31 New Year's Eve Office Closed	